

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT:

Please replace the abstract with the following amended paragraph:

~~--Method and apparatus for image compression while maintaining high resolution in selected areas within the image. An, where an~~ acquired image is represented by a two dimensional array of ~~MxN~~ pixels. The array is divided into blocks ~~-- of identical rectangular areas.~~ Data related to the division ~~of the array into blocks~~ is stored and a threshold level of pixel attribute value is determined. The average attribute value of each block is calculated and stored. ~~The average attribute value of each block is and~~ compared to the average attribute value of its adjacent blocks. Whenever the difference between two adjacent compared blocks is ~~greater than~~ exceeds the threshold level and as long as the block size is larger than one pixel, the adjacent compared blocks are divided into sub-blocks, ~~each of which containing A/2xB/2.~~ Each sub-blocks contains half the number of pixels and data related to the division of the adjacent compared blocks into sub-blocks is stored. ~~that division is stored.~~ The value of each sub-block is calculated and compared to the value of its adjacent sub-blocks. Whenever the difference between two adjacent blocks is below the threshold, the blocks are represented by representative pixels with attributes level that equals the value of the pixels that correspond to the compared block or sub-block.--